

Danny Yadron, *Wall Street Journal*

Rep. Betty McCollum wants to put the brakes on the Defense Department's 10-year sponsorship deal with NASCAR, saying the multimillion-dollar recruiting effort is a waste of money.

The Minnesota Democrat is also dubious that stock car sponsorship has much to do with enlistment numbers or troop readiness.

"This is not only putting a sticker on the car. This is paying for a racing team," Ms. McCollum's chief of staff, Bill Harper, told Washington Wire. "That doesn't contribute to military readiness."

The amendment is one of more than 400 that lawmakers want attached to Rep. Paul Ryan's spending bill to fund the government through Sept. 30.

In an effort to let the "House work its will," Speaker John Boehner is letting lawmakers in both parties offer amendments. The proposals have ranged from offbeat to uncompromising. One would ban using federal funds to round-up wild horses, unless for breeding purposes. Another would defund the Environmental Protection Agency.

It's unclear which proposals will end up in the final bill, scheduled for a vote later this week.

Congress directed the Army in 2000 to explore motor sports sponsorships as a recruiting tool. At some point last decade, each branch of the military had a partnership with NASCAR racing. The Marines axed their racing team in 2006 because of a smaller ad budget and because there was no way to know if it actually boosted recruiting. Today, only the Army and the National Guard still sponsor race cars.

Ms. McCollum's office estimates the Pentagon has spent more than \$100 million on its own NASCAR teams.

Col. Derik Crotts, director of the army's sponsorship, told Washington Wire in an email that the Army spends \$7 million a year on its racing team, and finds it valuable.

"Youth surveys show that motorsports is a passion point for young Americans," wrote Col. Crotts. "It is critical that the Army use these passion points to communicate with prospects and their influencers."

He continued, "In a 2009 among nationwide fans, 37% feel more positive about the Army due to its involvement in motorsports."

Ms. McCollum introduced another amendment Tuesday: No more than \$200 million of the spending package can be used to fund military bands.